

4. The Christian Family Planning (CFP) Seminar. The Christian Family Planning Seminar is offered by the Family Life Office of the Diocese of Rapid City. It is a three-hour seminar scheduled on a Saturday which gives couples an understanding of the Church's vision for sexuality, children and birth regulation in a sacramental marriage. Couples will hear a witness talk and also be introduced to the various methods of family planning approved by the diocese. These seminars are offered several times throughout the year in various locations. Couples are asked to attend one of these seminars. The schedule of CFP Seminars will be available from the priest or pastoral minister working with the couple.

In addition to *(or upon completion of)* these requirements, the couple will plan their marriage ceremony with the priest or deacon who will preside at their wedding. It is important early in the preparation process to discuss with the priest or deacon the guidelines set forth by the parish in which the couple will be married. If the couple is prepared in the Diocese of Rapid City and will marry in another diocese, they will discuss their ceremony with the priest or deacon in the parish where their marriage is to take place.

Conclusion

Sacramental marriage is important to the life of our Church and our society. Because of this, you are important to us and we rejoice with you in this wonderful adventure you are beginning. Be assured of our desire to help you become all that God desires for you in your married life. Pray for each other and with each other in these months ahead that you and your future spouse may realize the fullness of what the Marriage Preparation Program offers and make the most of this important opportunity to grow together spiritually.



Family Life Ministries

Chancery Annex at Terra Sancta

Office Hours: Mon - Fri 8am – 5pm

2101 City Springs Road Ste 200, Rapid City SD 57702 (605) 716-5214 ext. 236

www.rapidcitydiocese.org/family-life-ministries-social-justice

Preparing for Marriage in the Diocese of Rapid City



Appendix III-6

WHAT IS MARRIAGE PREPARATION ABOUT?

Congratulations! The Church rejoices with you as you celebrate your love in sacramental marriage. To help you get the best start possible and confirm your readiness for sacramental marriage, we ask that all couples preparing for marriage in the Diocese of Rapid City participate in the marriage preparation program. Preparation will help you understand and embrace God's plan for your married life. You will come to appreciate the values and virtues that guide you into married life. We want you and every couple preparing for marriage in our diocese to embrace and live God's plan for you in a way that will enable you not only to remain faithful to each other but also to experience the joy of a holy life together.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO?

When you begin thinking about “your wedding day,” also think about “the preparation for marriage.” Make an appointment with your parish priest or pastoral minister. The priest or pastoral minister will guide you through the preparation process. The following guidelines apply to engaged couples who will be prepared for marriage in the Diocese of Rapid City.

BEGINNING THE PROCESS

The Marriage Preparation Program will take at least six months to complete. Your schedule and the schedule of the priest or pastoral minister working with you, and the content of the program, requires that time. Formal preparation needs to be finished some weeks before the wedding to ensure that the necessary paper work required by the Church is completed in a timely fashion. If both parties are Catholic, the preparation may take place in the parish where either party is registered and involved. In situations where one member of the couple is not Catholic, the preparation normally takes place in the parish where the Catholic person is registered and involved.

In the initial interview with the priest or pastoral minister who will be working with the couple it is important to ensure that both parties are free to marry in the Catholic Church. Those couples who have been married and divorced need to bring that awareness to the attention of the priest or pastoral minister working with the couple.

Couples in a civil marriage seeking validation (the Church’s blessing) of their union as well as couples advanced in age may have the following requirements adjusted depending on their unique circumstances. They might also be required to complete the total marriage process outlined below. It is also important to review the program requirements and consider any special circumstances that will require the attention of the couple and/or the priest or pastoral minister working with them.

The Marriage Preparation Program consists of four aspects:

1. The FOCCUS Inventory. The FOCCUS Inventory is an instrument designed to assist the couple in exploring their relationship through a variety of questions divided into several categories. Once taken and scored the inventory is reviewed with the assistance of a trained facilitator, either a priest, deacon, married couple or individual.
2. The Marriage Preparation Retreat. Couples are asked to attend a retreat weekend given at the Terra Sancta Retreat Center in Rapid City. This retreat, which begins on Friday evening and ends on Sunday afternoon, is a wonderful time to relax, reflect and pray. The couple will be given the opportunity to explore God’s plan for married life and to process the material presented. Couples may choose one of several retreat weekends available throughout the year. Retreat dates will be available from the priest or pastoral minister working with the couple.
3. Evening Sessions. A series of sessions will be offered in the parishes of the diocese with couples who are preparing for marriage. They may be offered in a series of evenings or days.

These sessions will help the couples acquire the tools they need to live a joy-filled marriage. Couples are expected to attend all of the sessions, either in their own parish or if necessary in a neighboring parish. The schedule for these sessions may be obtained from the priest or pastoral minister working with the couple.